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ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1538  
INFO EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIAO/HQ ICE IAO WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHIK/AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI 0077

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 000220

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/FPP (LEDESMA-LEESE)  
DEPT FOR INL/HSTC (PULEO)  
DEPT FOR CA/VO/KCC  
DEPT FOR FRAUD PREVENTION MANAGERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SMIG](#) [KFRD](#) [KTIP](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [GR](#)

SUBJECT: STATISTICS ON ILLEGAL ALIEN MIGRATION IN GREECE

REF: 09 ATHENS 308; 09 ATHENS 1641

11. SUMMARY: The number of illegal migrants entering Greece has decreased in 2009 from a record high in 2008, but it remained near the high end of an alien migration surge that began around 2000. The number of illegal migrants arrested in 2009 has dropped to 126,000 from 146,000 in 2008 - a 14 percent decline. Albanians prevail as the major illegal migrant group, numbering approximately 63,500, followed by Afghani and Palestinian nationals at 13,700 and 8,500 respectively. As for alien smugglers, the number of arrests has decreased to approximately 1,700 in 2009 from just over 2,200 in 2008. Albanians lead with the highest number of smuggler arrests with 553 persons, followed by Greek and Turkish nationals with 356 and 171 arrests respectively. End Summary.

12. The following annual statistics were provided to the post's Fraud Prevention Unit (FPU) by the Aliens Division of the Hellenic Police. Ref A included figures of the number and nationalities of illegal aliens and alien smugglers arrested from 2005 to 2008. During that time period, the number of illegal aliens detained by the Hellenic Police and Hellenic Coast Guard steadily increased. However, from 2008 to 2009 the number of arrests decreased by 14 percent:

-- 2003: 51,031  
-- 2004: 42,327  
-- 2005: 66,351  
-- 2006: 95,239  
-- 2007: 112,364  
-- 2008: 146,337  
-- 2009: 126,145

13. Total number of aliens intercepted by nationality:

-- 2008: Albania (72,454), Afghanistan (25,577), Iraq (15,940), Somalia (6,713), Palestine (5,512), Pakistan (4,593), Georgia (2,961), Bangladesh (1,655), Myanmar (1,611), Eritrea (1,566).

-- 2009: Albania (63,563), Afghanistan (17,828), Palestine (10,763), Somalia (7,710), Iraq (7,662), Pakistan (4,854), Georgia (2,522), Eritrea (1,486), Myanmar (1,458), Bangladesh (1,443).

14. Total number of alien smugglers arrested:

-- 2008: 2,211

-- 2009: 1,716

2009 figures indicate a 22.4 percent drop from 2008.

15. Top five smuggler nationalities, including the number of arrests:

-- 2008: Albania (794), Greece (445), Turkey (206), Bulgaria (139), Iraq (132) (first 11 months).

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-- 2009: Albania (553), Greece (356), Turkey (171), Bulgaria (106), Iraq (106).

16. The Greek police partially attributes the decline of smuggler and alien arrests in 2009 to the introduction in July of harsher smuggling and illegal migration laws. The continued expansion of joint border patrol operations across the Aegean Sea by the EU border protection agency, Frontex, may also help deter would-be migrants and smugglers from entering Europe through Greece (ref B).

17. Post has entered CLASS hits (P6E smugglers) for 183 individuals arrested and convicted in 2009, based on data provided by the GoG.

18. Comment: The 2009 figures show Albanian nationals continuing to account for at least half the illegal immigrant population intercepted in Greece. Other notable trends include the drop of Afghan and Iraqi nationals in 2009 while other nationalities from the horn of Africa and Middle Eastern locations (such as Somalia and Palestinian territories) seem to continue their upward increase. (NOTE: Many Iraqis and Afghans claim they are from Palestine in expectation of better treatment (and possibly less detention time and an easier asylum process). Greek authorities know that many illegal aliens claiming to be from Palestine are in fact from somewhere else. Similarly, there are suspicions some of those claiming to be Somalis are from elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa and seek to exploit the virtual impossibility of arranging deportation to Somalia. END NOTE) Post will continue to monitor these figures - particularly of Iraqi and Afghan nationals - to determine if changes to the political stability of these countries affect migrant patterns in Greece. End Comment.  
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